

South Carolina General Assembly
118th Session, 2009-2010

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S. 875

STATUS INFORMATION

General Bill

Sponsors: Senator Fair

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Introduced in the Senate on May 21, 2009

Currently residing in the Senate Committee on **Education**

Summary: Scientific education

HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

Date	Body	Action Description with journal page number
5/21/2009	Senate	Introduced and read first time SJ -4
5/21/2009	Senate	Referred to Committee on Education SJ -4

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VERSIONS OF THIS BILL

[5/21/2009](#)

(Text matches printed bills. Document has been reformatted to meet World Wide Web specifications.)

A BILL

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION [59-29-115](#) SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, AND DISTRICT AND SCHOOL GOVERNING AUTHORITIES, SHALL FACILITATE SCIENTIFIC EDUCATION, INCLUDING CONTROVERSIAL SCIENTIFIC EDUCATION, IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF THIS STATE, TO PROHIBIT THESE AUTHORITIES FROM IMPEDING THIS EDUCATION, AND TO PROVIDE FOR PUBLICATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT TO SCHOOL GOVERNING AUTHORITIES.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. The General Assembly finds that an important purpose of science education is to inform students about scientific evidence and to help students develop critical thinking skills they need in order to become intelligent, productive, and scientifically informed citizens. The General Assembly further finds that the teaching of some scientific subjects, such as biological evolution, the chemical origins of life, global warming, and human cloning can cause controversy and that some teachers may be unsure of the expectations concerning how they should present information on these subjects.

SECTION 2. Article 1, Chapter 29, Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

"Section [59-29-115](#). (A) The State Board of Education, and district and school governing authorities, shall endeavor to create an environment within all public schools of this State that encourages students to explore scientific questions, learn about scientific evidence, develop critical thinking skills, and respond appropriately and respectfully to differences of opinion about controversial issues. These educational authorities also shall endeavor to assist teachers to find more effective ways to present the science curriculum that addresses scientific controversies. Teachers must be permitted to help students understand, analyze, critique, and review in an objective manner the scientific strengths and weaknesses of existing scientific theories pertinent to the course.

(B) School governing authorities including, but not limited to, school and district superintendents, principals, and administrators, may not prohibit a teacher in a public school in this State from helping students understand, analyze, critique, and review in an objective manner the scientific strengths and weaknesses of existing scientific theories pertinent to the course.

(C) This section applies only to the teaching of scientific information and may not be construed to promote any religious or nonreligious doctrine, promote discrimination for or against a particular set of religious beliefs or nonbeliefs, or promote discrimination for or against religion or nonreligion.

(D) By the start of the 2009-2010 school term, the State Department of Education shall notify all district superintendents of the provisions of this act, and each superintendent shall in turn disseminate the information to district employees."

SECTION 3. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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